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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [MD](#) [GG](#) [PL](#) [UP](#)  
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: EUR A/S FRIED VISIT: THE FOREIGN POLICY  
TUG-OF-WAR IN A YANUKOVYCH CABINET

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: While acknowledging PM Yanukovych's inevitable influence in shaping Ukrainian foreign policy, FM Tarasyuk asserted to EUR A/S Fried during their September 6 dinner that President Yushchenko could still maintain his primacy on foreign policy, as established in the Constitution, by actively issuing policy instructions. Tarasyuk expressed confidence that Yushchenko would engage. Defense Minister Hrytsenko and his wife, journalist Yuliya Mostova, separately said one idea being mooted to preserve presidential authority was to combine the Presidential Secretariat and the National Security and Defense Council

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(NSDC) into one institution and appoint a powerful head, since Yushchenko alone could not act as an effective counterbalance. Tarasyuk aired his concerns regarding declining Polish influence in Europe under the Kaczynski brothers due in significant part to Polish quarrels with Germany, which in turn diminished Warsaw's ability to act as a Ukrainian advocate in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. Georgia's difficulties and vulnerability to Russian pressure were also a mutual concern for Ukraine and the U.S. In a September 7 meeting (reported separately), PM Yanukovych said his visit to Poland had been a great success. Tarasyuk said Ukraine would continue with its implementation of the Ukraine-Moldova customs agreement, a decision which had disappointed Tiraspol and Moscow. End Summary.

A Condominium Foreign Policy  
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12. (C) Tarasyuk frankly acknowledged the different views on foreign policy between President Yushchenko and PM Yanukovych and the real role Yanukovych would play, accepting A/S Fried's point that a truly independent Ukraine and its foreign policy depended in great part on its energy policies.

Both agreed that there was no such thing as a completely energy independent country. There was also no 100 percent guarantee that Yanukovych and the Cabinet would accept Yushchenko's lead. Tarasyuk nevertheless contended that the ultimate direction depended on Yushchenko asserting himself, given his constitutional role for determining foreign policy; the President needed to use his rights and more actively issue policy instructions.

13. (C) Tarasyuk said that he had engaged Yushchenko earlier September 6 on the need to push back on recent statements by Yanukovych, his advisers, and others which contradicted Yushchenko's foreign policy objectives on issues like NATO, the EU and the WTO; such comments could not be left unanswered. In the roundtable discussions leading up to the Universal and the appointment of Yanukovych as PM, all

parties had agreed that EU membership was a strategic priority and that WTO requirements should be finished by the end of 2006. The central issue of discussion had been NATO, but Yushchenko had convinced Yanukovych that Ukraine had no strategic alternative but to join NATO.

14. (C) Tarasyuk stressed that the Presidential decree on the conduct of foreign policy made clear that only the President, PM and FM had the right to pronounce on foreign policy on behalf of Ukraine; Yushchenko could not let other political players infringe on his area of responsibility. Tarasyuk expressed confidence that Yushchenko would engage. First Deputy Defense Minister Polyakov suggested that the issue of how best to manage and exercise Presidential powers remained an open question. Under Kuchma, the Presidency was so strong that the issue was moot; Yushchenko had not yet ensured stronger Presidential coordination.

15. (C) Over lunch September 7, Defense Minister Hrytsenko and his wife Yuliya Mostova, Ukraine's leading political journalist, told Fried that Yushchenko alone was not a strong enough actor; he needed a strong implementer either at the National Security and Defense Council or in the Presidential Secretariat. Current Acting NSDC Secretary Horbulin was

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literally too old; pushing 70, he exceeded the mandatory 65 year civil servant limit, but he also was "too professional."

One idea being considered was combining the Secretariat and NSDC as a single institution of presidential authority and place it under the command of someone like former PM Yekhanurov to foster a real institutional counterweight to the Donetsk clan. Hrytsenko, who served at the NSDC under Horbulin from 1996-98, stressed that the NSDC did serve as just such an effective powerbase at that time.

Poland - shared concern

16. (C) FM Tarasyuk, aware that A/S Fried would travel to Warsaw after Kyiv, raised Ukraine's concern about Poland's

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eroding standing in Europe since the end of the Kwasniewski Presidency, particularly in Polish-Germany relations; the Poles were making emotional mistakes which helped no one. While he liked new Polish FM Anna Fotyga, she was inexperienced and faced a steep learning curve. Tarasyuk frankly acknowledged that Ukraine was affected by Poland's declining influence, since Poland served as Ukraine's chief advocate in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

17. (C) Fried shared Tarasyuk's concerns about Poland's approach to Germany, adding that his German interlocutors in Berlin had raised the issue as well. Kwasniewski had played a key role in mediating Ukrainian roundtable discussions during the Orange Revolution in November-December 2004. The Kaczynski brothers were not as comfortable with Poland's place in Europe and seemed driven by a 19th-century style of patriotism.

18. (C) Tarasyuk revealed that President Yushchenko had hoped to broker better German-Polish communications and relations on the margins of the upcoming Babyn Yar commemorations, but that neither side would send their President or a particularly high government official; the Bundestag head would represent Germany, and Poland remained undecided. He also noted that President Putin would represent Russia.

19. (C) In a meeting September 7 with A/S Fried (reported separately), Yanukovych was upbeat about the results of his September 6 talks in Poland, which he described as useful and necessary. PM Jaroslav Kaczynski had agreed to an official visit in November, during which he may visit Crimea to see the AN-70 transport aircraft project, in which Yanukovych hoped the Poles might replace the Russians as partners.

Georgia - shared concern  
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¶10. (C) A/S Fried said that Tbilisi needed friendly advice from natural supporters like Ukraine in order to learn to be patient and to understand what not to do, in particular he mentioned overreacting to provocations. Sakaashvili needed to understand that Tbilisi's horizons needed to be broader than merely Georgia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Russia. Tarasyuk said that Georgia was Ukraine's closest regional partner and faced much greater challenges than Ukraine did. Both agreed GUAM had a real purpose, despite the irritation it clearly caused to Moscow. Fried described Europe's reluctance to advance Georgia's integration with Euro-Atlantic structures, but if Georgia successfully stuck to a moderate approach vis-a-vis Russia and pushed democratization, it deserved to be taken seriously.

Moldova and Transnistria  
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¶11. (C) A/S Fried praised Ukrainian cooperation on addressing the Transnistrian problem since Yushchenko became President and urged the GOU to continue constructive policies, particularly on implementing the customs regime with Moldova which protected Moldovan sovereignty and allowed Ukraine, the EU, and U.S. to work together. Tarasyuk stressed that Moscow and Tiraspol had been disappointed that the GOU had not changed its stance on the customs agreement after Yanukovych became PM. Ukrainian interests remained unchanged: resolve the only immediate factor of instability and potential threat to national sovereignty on its borders that Transnistria represented.

¶12. (C) Tarasyuk acknowledged that the new government had taken action to close a railroad connection between Moldova and Ukraine without coordinating with the MFA; the MFA had scrambled to broker the solution which had allowed passenger traffic to resume earlier September 6, warning others in the government of the damage the closure action could do to Ukraine's image and interests. However, Tarasyuk stressed that the Moldovans were not easy partners. They had taken advantage of Ukraine after the March self-blockade by the Transnistrians to jack up the freight rates charged to Ukrainian business by USD 3.50 per ton, profiting from the situation at Ukraine's expense. Yushchenko, former PM Yekhanurov, and Tarasyuk had made no headway on resolving the problem since March; new DPM/Finance Minister Azarov and Transport Minister Rudkovsky had used "their own instruments" in taking a different tact in defending Ukrainian interests, resulting in a resumption of freight rail along the much shorter rail line through Transnistria used before March.

¶13. (U) A/S Fried has cleared this cable.

¶14. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website:  
[www.state.gov/p/eur/kiev](http://www.state.gov/p/eur/kiev).

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